1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

369 There are a few observations concerning ceremonial practice
796 which apply to all the city Santal (excluding, of course, those
[622] who live in town *bustees*). We have seen that the city Santal
778 are not even a community to the degree that the *bustee* Santal
[793] are; they do not, for the most part, live side-by-side, they have no headman or priest and they have no Sacred Grove in which to assemble for community worship. The practice of community worship is ruled out for lack of physical facilities, but as we have seen from our examination of the *bustee*, there is little reason to think that their presence would be sufficient to maintain ceremonial practice and participation at the level obtained in rural villages.

• 342 What is most striking about the city Santal is that they do
369 not practice ancestor worship in their Company houses. Their
769 explanation of this, with a little elaboration, appears to me to be an adequate one. They say, "Who knows whose houses these were before we got here—they are not our houses. That
[192] is why we do not worship here." It will be recalled that ancestor worship is performed behind a wall dividing off a portion of the main room of the house and known as "inside" (*bhitar*; Santali and Hindi = "inside"). The same word is used to refer to secret rites and deities of a family and of a local lineage, i.e., when a question touches on such things they will say you are asking an "inside" question. It will also be recalled that this "inside" portion of the house must be guarded against pollution by menstruating women. Since it is not permissible to erect such a wall within a company house, again physical facilities in the city render traditional practice difficult. But more than the particular difficulty of lack of a wall, there is a
[783] general question of pollution. Not only does the company house not provide a proper sanctuary for the "inside" rites of

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

• 342
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769
783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

177 Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
327 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
369 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles
362 which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

121 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-
182 cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial
464 patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

21 Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

V. HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THEIR OWN HOME

a. Setting up a household.

When husband and wife have been separated from his parents, they set up a household for themselves. They ask the village headman to get a house-site. They give him beer and food. The husband cuts trees and brings them from the forest; he cuts thatching grass in the forest, or buys it from somewhere. He fixes nine posts in the ground; thereupon he puts up three roof-beams; at three places he fixes double cross-beams, he fixes forty rafters, and in three places, at the top, in the middle, and at the bottom of these, he puts cross-laths. Thereupon he makes the rafter-framework and after this thatches. Then he makes a wattle and daub wall; having done this he puts up something to keep separate the place for the ancestors. The wife then kneads earth and smears this on; afterwards she fills the house inside with earth and plasters all smooth, and she makes a fire-place. The husband makes a door, of wood or of thin bamboo-slips. In the house they have two bedsteads, a wooden mortar and pestle, a winnowing-fan, baskets, brooms, earthenware vessels, big and small, ladles made of wood or of pumpkin-shell, kodali axe, chisel, adze, sickle, knife, plough-beam, yoke, plough and plough-share, flute, bow and arrows, battle-axe, sword and dancing-drum and kettle-drum. Poor people have no battle-axe, sword, dancing-drum, or kettle-drum.

The sacred closet is for the ancestors to stay hidden in. Women belonging to other men are not permitted to go in there; and some people do not permit even their own daughters to go in there, that is, when they have been married. In this closet they make a small enclosure, and this is the real place for the ancestors to stay hidden in. In the closet money is also kept. On the backside of the house they have the homestead field; here they cultivate maize. And in front of the house towards the village street they have the court-yard. This they fence securely in on the four sides. They make two openings for going out and in, one is the homestead field door and one the village street door.

The man builds a shed for the cows and bullocks and buffaloes, a fold for the goats and sheep and a sty for the pigs. The fowls and the cat stay in the house, and the dog stays somewhere on the verandah, to guard the house.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

smile, "O, there are the "Bongas" (*evil-spirits, deities*)." Thus finishes the daily routine of their lives.

The annual round of their life is a string of agricultural activities, working as day-labourers when there is no work to do at home, tribal feasts at the Holy-grove of the village or at the house of the Headman or other villagers, ceremonial hunts as during the "Baha" (*Flower-festival*), dances enmasse during the tribal festivities or at moon-lit nights and fish-gathering on a quest of joy and food combined.

And in between, if there is any leisure time they spend it in gathering fruit, making nets and in occasional hunts to the neighbouring forests and indulge in the delights of the chase of their primitive semi-hunting life.

Santal Cottages

Typical Santal cottages almost invariably stand on both sides of a straggling "kulhi," (*village lane*) where pigs squeal and fowls flutter about.

Each cottage is a two or three-roomed affair. On the floor corn is strewn for being aired. The plinth made of mud, rises one to three cubits high, the average being a cubit and half. It is beautifully blackened with a dye made of burnt straw plastered with cow-dung. The walls of the houses are made of bamboos or "sal" logs and are generally plastered

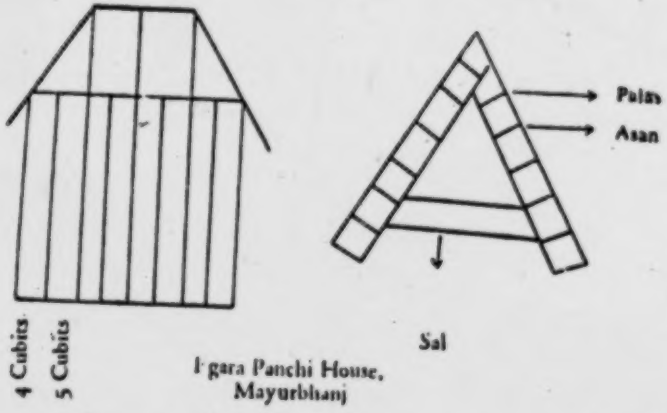
3r Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

342 over with a thick coat of mud on both sides. The
824 wooden posts which go to make the frame of the roof are of "pòlas" (*Butea frondosa*) and "asan" (*Terminalia Tomentosa*) trees. The main rafters are made of solid "sal" (*Shorea Robusta*, Gaertn) planks, the roof is supported on *Sal* posts, and thatching grass (generally stalks of paddy) is laid two to three
342 inches in thickness. There is, of course, a good deal of variation in the construction of these according to the financial position of the house-holder ; and in Andharia, Mayurbhanj, we were shown a house belonging to Dalpat Màrndi, a well-to-do Santal, constructed absolutely on a novel plan. The cottage did away with all beams and rafters as one sees in an ordinary cottage. There were no supporting posts to the walls, the triangular frame of the roof rested alone on two "sal" rafters placed on both sides near the end.

As regards the dimensions of Santal houses, we noticed some variations. The usual variety in Mayurbhanj is called "egara panchi" (*eleven by five cubits*). Others are 'bara panchi' (*twelve by five cubits*) and "tera panchi" (*thirteen by five cubits*). The richer people have "sat satara" sizes (*seventeen by seven*). But in no case, can the Santals have cottages measuring six by seven cubits. It is considered inauspicious to construct such houses, but no magic could be traced at the bottom of such ideas.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

In the enclosed diagram, we have shown a usual 342 •
'egara panchi' (*eleven by five cubits*) house. This is the orthodox model, much in favour, and consists of nine poles of "Sal" (*Shorea Robusta*) fixed on the ground. Three of them are fixed at the either side of the cottage and three go to support the roof, standing just in the middle. The poles on either side, "anatang khunti" (*side-posts*) measure four cubits each ; whereas, those in the middle, are called "mutul khunti" (*middle-posts*). The roofs of such cottages slope on both sides.



I'gara Panchi House,
Mayurbhanj

There are of course wealthy Santals, who have 342
imitated their Hindu neighbours so fully in their 556
manners and customs, that in their house-building, 179
there is nothing of their own. We saw some such huge structures at Tentulbati, now rendered into piles of mud, as the inmates had fled owing,

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

342 556 177 it was told, to the depredations of evil-spirits. And even brick-built houses like those of the rich land-owners of Orissa caught our attention at Tikari-para, Mayurbhanj, with surrounding walls of brick that one cannot usually associate with Santal life,[1] except in their absence of windows.

342 776 Windows Santals will never have. "O, the Boṅgas," will again be the answer if you question them on the point. The Santal dog, who snarls at [231] the chance passer-by, and is treated and fed like a member of the family, keeps an all-night vigil. If [574] you call for a Santal at mid-night, it may be he may greet you with an arrow, for he thinks that "Boṅgas" take human shapes and lure away men and women.

353 Santal walls are the beauty-spots of the hamlet. Here the inner artistic craving of the primitive tribe has displayed itself in a realm of phantasy. In some places, we saw the walls painted with a variety of colours, white, yellow, black, red and chocolate; sometimes with one colour and sometimes with alternate stripes, again with queer patches of triangles and rectangles. (See illustrations). Various pictures, associated with Santal life, sometimes greet your eyes. Here is a Brobdingnagian deity aiming a shaft at a

1 This was the house of Chandramohan Murmu of Tikaripara, Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj. Its dimensions were measured to be 50 by 20 cubits.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

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Jòmak' ñunyak' bòcha bànuk' taleya,
Mènt' ñèpèl bòcha ahajibà.
Akal kèdae gateñ sāwanek'edae
Ità ránu gateñ, bale ñawana,
Sanam hòpòniñko ḍiṅgàṛ cabayen.

(Translation)

Welcome, welcome! O friends dear!
(We have) neither food nor drink to offer.
But we offer you our greetings,
(It matters little whether) the harvest
failed or it was in plenty;
For want of seeds (and consequent want
of food)
All my sons have nothing of their own.

• 342 184 735 Out to trace variations in Mayurbhanj from the Santals in the Santal Parganas, we were somewhat pleased to see that their houses were better built and more commodious, but the inner economic structure told the self-same tale as in the folk-song. 735 [114] [123] We selected some villages at random and questioned the Santals (without claiming for ourselves the functions of the economic surveyor) on the point. But 735 434 [464] [426] they replied, "We are very poor. Our average agricultural income is from Rs. 5 to 6 per month. Those more industrious supplement it by working as day labourers which may bring them Rs. 3 more. But about half of the population are indebted to

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

562 not get drunk." Only if we had not seen women
273 babbling in drunken brawl with the introduction of the outstill system in the Santal Parganas, and had not educated Santals at Baripada told us an opposite tale, . . we could thoroughly agree with her sex-patriotism, if such a phrase is permissible.

562 In house-construction, however, the division of
342 labour has a nicety of its own, for, we learn, the
784 women cannot sit upon a thatch except on pain of
[783] social excommunication. Such a pollution can only
[462] be expatiated by *Pujas* to the god "Dhòròm." So by its very necessity, house-building is man's
562 preserve. A quite similar taboo attaches to them
784 during funerals when according to custom, women
764 cannot accompany the procession beyond the limits of the village where the death occurred.

464 Santal men engaged in the police service were
625 highly spoken of by the Superintendent of Police,
159 Mayurbhanj, as efficient, obedient and hard-working. Asked if their drink-habit was not a hindrance to them, he was emphatic that it did not matter at all. Mr. Mahanty, a Deputy Magistrate, spoke in a similar strain about his Santal employees.

562 And we have seen women at work, at work
461 during the heat-wave of the Santal Parganas when all nature flies indoors, women singing at their work, punctual to a fault and hard-working to a painful extent. But, if her hour of work is seven a.m.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

668 common platform. They long for the development of their distinctive culture—a pre-Dravidian Jharkhand.

177 648 [641] Now with Independence, and its concomitant adult franchise, things are undergoing a rapid transformation. The Santal, along with the other aboriginals, like his more civilised brethren has got to handle a ballot paper. They see that the more advanced Indians are trying to have a better standard of life and are rushing in for more and more of education, for amenities of life hitherto denied to the hill and jungle-folk. Development plans of the government, Community projects, programmes of tribal uplift are gradually throwing open to them roads, motor lorries, schools and fineries. Planes buzz over them, radios blare and torch lights flash. With all the glare of modernism in their eyes, is it a wonder that these aboriginals, so long living idyllic lives in the backwoods of songs and dances are puzzled at the threshold of a New World?

177 So long the seeds of a new order were in the air. Old sets of value now seemed disturbed. In [184] Bolpur area, one could notice new house-types with [342] windows and furniture, they lacked in the past. [352] Santals were found chewing betels, drinking less and [27] taking to milk and tea and cigarettes. Many have [262] given up beef like the Hindus, even buffalo meat and pork have gone off their menu. The old Santal

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

has been going on for hundred years ever since civilisation dawned on the banks of the lower Ganges, and is yet far from complete, has led to a distinct uplift of the primitive peoples, and has been making highly desirable additions to the culture of the civilised community."

The Santal Character

Any one who comes in contact with the Santal, cannot but be struck with the heavy-built, bronze-bodied men and women. They are extremely hardy and can work incessantly with a smiling face. If the body is thus healthy, the mind is equally so. The truthfulness of the Santal is proverbial; the exceptions are due to his contact with the outside world. Accused in criminal courts the Santal would cut short everything by a clean confession. He is generally a meek fellow; but if he says "no" once, none can turn it into "yes."

Any one who has seen a Santal house, cannot but be struck with their habitual cleanliness. All things are kept neatly arranged. No dust can accumulate in the yards and all refuse and rubbish are neatly stowed away. The Santal is frank and open, honest and gentle. He does not understand the intricacies of life and craft and hypocrisy are not associated with him.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPTER II

Material Culture of the Santal.

The Village: The Santal villages with their houses on both sides of the street are situated on the plains. These villages are not well fortified. In each village only one unpaved avenue can be found, the width of which is about twenty five to thirty feet and the length is equal to the length of the village. There are tall trees at intervals on both sides of the avenue which make the path shady. In a big village generally twenty to thirty houses can be seen and in a small village there are only ten to twelve houses. In each village a Majhisthan is built, where Kulidrup[1] (Panchayat) takes place and taxes are collected by the head-man of the village, and there the Manjhi Haram (head-man) worships the Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Burhi. In almost every village a Jahersthan can be found which is nothing but a cluster of Sal (Shorea robusta) trees where the Santals worship their village deities. The water supply of the village is derived from a streamlet which runs nearby. The Santal villages are very neat and clean and all the villagers take particular care to keep it so, and scavenging is done by the pigs and dogs which help in keeping the village neat. As soon as the houses have all been erected and the village established, some trees such as mango, jack-fruit etc. are planted; the Satals[2] have a belief that these trees bring prosperity. The Headman's house is generally built more or less in the centre of the village and close to the Majhisthan. The villages are generally known by their place names as Sunderpahari, Chandna, etc.

361 [363] 344 347 346 651 622 778 312 364 231 245 622 342 103

[1 Erratum: i.e., kulidrup. 2 Erratum: i.e., Santal. -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

798 824 Gosainera, a female deity. This Mowa tree is known as the Lady of the Grove. But it was noticed in the Jahirsthan both in Dumka and Godda area, that at the base of several other Sal trees there were stones which represented the Pukri and other Bongas.

342 787 825 [782] **The House :** Before constructing the house they test the site by tying a rooster on the site for five days, and if within these five days the cock loses its life they give up the place thinking it to be undesirable. If the rooster remains alive they begin the construction of the house after sacrificing a fowl to Marang Buru.

342 782 Before entering the new house the owner of the house brings a mug of water after bathing in a stream nearby and pours a little water in each room. In the room facing east the owner puts three cups of Sal leaves on the floor and pours "Handi" (rice beer) in those cups taking the name of Marang Buru and Pilchu Haram and utters the following words :—

"I have constructed the house by taking your names. See that every thing remains alright".

342 [351] [245] [784] Mango and jackfruit trees are planted in the adjoining field in the belief that prosperity will come. During the house ceremony widows and divorced women cannot enter the house.

The house and its contents : The house of the Santals is not of varied design and the plan of the main structure is always the same. In some can be found a courtyard in the centre, and rooms on two sides and mud walls on the other two sides. An average house of the Santals measures 15 to 18 feet in the length and 10 to 12 feet in width.

In the Daminikoh area and outside this area of the Santal Parganas two types of houses can be seen.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

One of which the Santals call 'bangla orak' i.e. gable house. It is rectangular in form and is generally about 14 to 15 feet in length and 9 to 10 feet in breadth. The roof of this type is two sided. The other type of house is called by them 'Katom orak' i.e. umbrella house. In this house the roof is four sided. 342 •

The most common type of house the Santals build is the gable house. In constructing this house nine big posts are required, which are either got from the plot where they construct the house or are purchased. These nine posts are sunk in the ground in three rows, each row consisting of three posts. The middle one they fix a little longer than those of the two sides. Horizontally on the posts of the three rows, three big heavy beams are placed. Three cross beams are then fixed on both sides. These cross beams are tied with the middle and side posts. Then a number of rafters are tied over the cross beams. A frame work of split-bamboo is then fixed over it. For roofing, they generally use paddy straw or a special type of grass. This they get in abundance in the forest, and it is stronger and more durable than paddy straw. On the sides of each house is a platform measuring two to two and a half feet in width and the length is equal to that of the room. The floor of the rooms and the platforms are made of beaten earth whereas the walls are made by placing branches between the post and plastering it with earth and cowdung, their thickness being about 18 inches. They apply a plaster of earth on the wall, and three feet from the floor, they smear a very dark grey wash which is prepared by mixing cowdung with straw ash. There is only one door in each room and no other

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SANTAL PARGANAS

342 ventilation except a few holes high up on the wall. In front of the house the eaves of the roof are elongated which serves as a covered verandah. The floor of the house is a little raised above the ground, being filled up with earth. This is trampled down hard and made smooth with mud mixed with cowdung.

342 Every Santal house in which the head of the
778 family lives has a 'Bhitar'. This is a part of a room
769 partitioned by a low wall which runs out from the side wall some six to nine feet into the com-
[609] partment. It is a kind of stall, and is sacred to the ancestors. Here food is kept for the ancestors and no
[784] stranger is permitted inside. The married daughter of the house, who in her girlhood was allowed entry is now not permitted inside, because she now belongs to another family and might cause religious pollution.

343 There is a separate shed for cattle. Within this
231 shed in some houses special arrangement is made to keep pigs. In one corner of the cattle-shed two mud-walls about three feet in height are built, to form a small rectangular sty. Over it bamboo sticks and branches of trees are placed, so that pigs cannot escape by jumping. A hole is made in one of the walls and bamboo sticks are placed there in such a way that by raising these sticks the pigs can easily come out and enter. But in some villages in the Godda Damin are found the pig-sheds built outside the house. In this case the walls of about 5 feet and the roof are made of thatch.

342 Inside the house on the verandah the "Dhenk" $\frac{1}{\wedge}$
252 (rice-husker) is fixed and a mill-stone is kept. Except
351 during cold season, when the inside is warm, the
[407] Santals generally stay outside on the courtyard both day
$\frac{1}{\wedge}$ [Erratum: this should read "'Dhenki'". Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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and night. As a rule they cook their food outside, but always have a fire-place inside. During the cold season they generally cook their food inside, the result being that the house specially at night, is suffocatingly full of smoke and every thing becomes covered with soot. This does not, however, seem to affect the Santals much. In the bed-room they store their rice and all other belongings, and the fowls are kept too in that room at night. It is, of course, not possible to keep such a house clean, even if they tried to do so.

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Agriculture :—The Santals before becoming agriculturists were probably in the hunting stage. Still, nothing pleases them so much as to be out for hunting, they even now observe the "Dehiri hunting", which is an annual hunt. During the time of the annual hunt the Dehiri priest performs certain ceremonies to propitiate "Sin Bonga" to avert calamity during hunting. All these suggest that prior to becoming agriculturists the Santals were in the hunting stage. At present the Santals are typical agriculturists. There is no authentic record when the Santal first started tilling the soil. Rev. Bodding in his memoir, "How the Santals live" has mentioned their first attempt at cultivation in the following words :—

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"It is just possible that one of their first attempts to get something out of the soil may have been something like what is now called 'kurau', a mode of cultivation that is said to have been used also by Santals in former years, but is not practised by them at the present time, so far as is known. It is, however, still kept up by the Paharias living on the hills of the Santal country. A piece of jungle is cut down high up

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St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

As the days lengthen and become warmer, other activities find their place in the routine. When the first rain has fallen the men begin to dig up the pits of rotted cow manure beside their homes, carry loads of manure to the fields, and first plough the beds where the seed rice will be sown. At the same period they carry out repairs to their houses, and the walls of new houses begin to rise. Some walls are built by constructing a screen of thin sticks on which a mud plaster is fastened, but most of the walls are built by adding a layer of wet clay to the layers which have previously dried in the sun. Timber for rafters and posts is brought from the forest, and is not always paid for. Bamboos are cut and sliced; they are needed as a foundation for the thatch. Home-made rope is prepared. Rice straw is the material commonly used for roofing.

At this time some men devote their energies to trapping and snaring. A party of men may be formed for digging out a colony of field rats which will supplement the diet. Many varieties of bird traps and snares are in use. Some have insects attached to them as bait, with birdlime to snare the birds. Others are set on the ground to catch partridge with ingenious arrangements of slip-knots and a captive bird in the centre to act as a decoy. Some of the operations call for elaborate preparation. Nets are taken down from under the rafters where they have hung since the previous year. The men seek out pools of water which may be still left in some shady hollow of the forest when most of the water has dried, for there the birds will come to drink. Traps are formed by nets, or by baskets attached by a string to where one of the men sits waiting to pull it and entrap the bird. On an April day in Barikul two parties of men set out on trapping expeditions. One of them went to a distant forest and returned with three peacocks. The other party spent the day near the banks of a nearby stream and gathered three-score birds, including doves, grey partridges, Indian drongos weaver birds and crow pheasants, all of which are eaten by the Santals.

At the same season the women find new employment. One of the commonest of the trees growing in the villages, the fields and the forests is the *mahkom* (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.); it has thick sepalled succulent flowers during the spring. These flowers fall from the trees during the early hours of the morning, and the women and girls rise early to collect them. They are used in a variety of ways. When dried they provide either a nutritious cattle food or a supplement for human diet. They are used in

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

A fourteen-year-old boy who was once asked his name replied: "By my name I cannot do anything." Pressed for some explanation of his words, he said: "By my name I cannot walk." It was then explained by some bystanders that the name by which he was known was *Leḍha*, "the lame one". There is a large number of figurative and hidden names for common objects. These names are used in conversation between those who are in the joking relationship with one another and particularly at the time of weddings. "White horse" is beer and "red horse" is spirits; "sheep's *ghi*"[1] is salt; "jackal's horn" is pepper; "frog spawn" is water. "We are sweeping the courtyard" means that we are washing our teeth; "Have you taken the harrow over the field?" means Have you brushed your hair? "Have you married off your middle son?" means Have you eaten your rice? There are many phrases to describe the evacuation of waste products from the body, one of which may be quoted. A man excuses himself from the company of his fellows with the words, "I am going to pay my rent!"

The Santal love of colour and decoration also gives expression to their sense of the joyous in life. Men are sparing in the use of personal adornment, though youths wearing ear-rings or necklaces made from seeds pass without remark. Women are fond of ornaments. Most of them wear a small flower-shaped brass ornament in the left side of the nose and have brass ear-rings. They all wear a *hasli* of silver or brass, a large ring that hangs round the neck. Bangles of silver, shell or glass are worn. They delight to fix flowers of red and white in their hair, and they enhance the lines of their eyes with a dark paste. On special occasions some of the heavier ornaments are brought out—large bell-shaped ear-rings, silver ornaments for the hair, anklets and rings for the feet and toes. The women also decorate the houses with gay-coloured patterns. The houses receive a new plaster coat of earth at the end of the rainy season in preparation for the Harvest festival. The house plinth or veranda and the wall up to a foot or two above the plinth are plastered a very dark grey, the colour being prepared by mixing cowdung with straw ash. Above this dark colour, on a first coat of light earth, the housewives vie with one another to attract the attention of their fellow villagers and of passers-by. There is no uniformity and the colours used depend rather on the coloured clays that are available in the neighbourhood of the village, but red predominates. Some house walls give

[1] Clarified butter.

[NEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 50]

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

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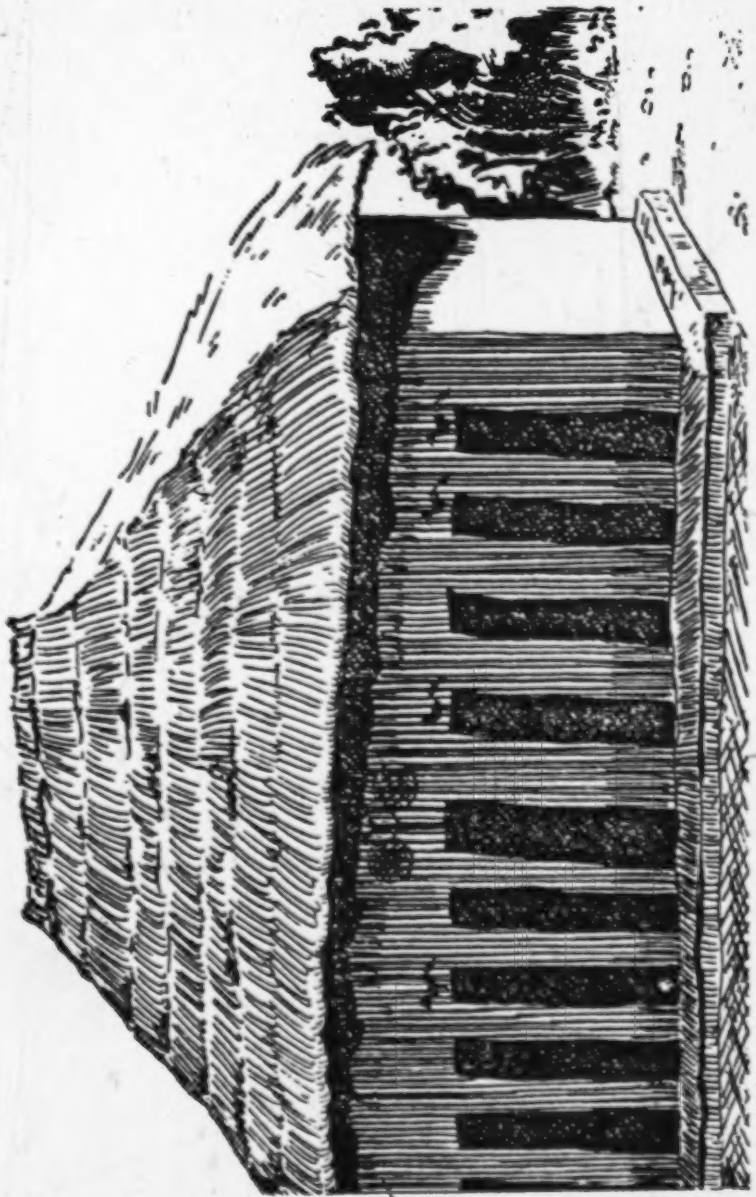

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the appearance of a coloured chequer board, while others have rectangular blocks of colour—red, black and yellow. On some houses there are geometrical patterns, and a favourite design represents plantain trees. Imaginative artists find scope on some of the walls and draw designs incorporating flowers, birds and animals and stylized but animated figures of men and women; on one occasion I observed the figure of an aeroplane in blue, red and yellow earth, giving a tolerable imitation of camouflage paint. The forms are limited by the technique, the drawings being done with the fingers of the right hand dipped in the colours.

The decay of primitive artistic culture in India has attracted the widespread attention of students. Over wide areas tribespeople are being encouraged to be ashamed of their dances and songs, and their arts are dying out. It does seem, however, that at least in some areas the Santals are keeping alive their traditional arts and music, and that it is virile enough to find expression in the creation of new forms. Herein lies one of the greatest causes for hopefulness concerning the future of the tribe. It says much for their social life that they maintain these institutions in spite of their depressed economic condition and their status as a small minority in nearly all the areas where they live. Hitherto they have been spared from the dangers of a uniform national system of education, and it remains to be seen how much of their artistic life will survive the "planning" that is now in vogue.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

one of the original twelve *khût*. They are not allowed to have spots made on them and they will not be vaccinated, but they may be cicatrized; however, their daughters and sisters are not allowed to be tattooed until after they are married. The unmarried men are not allowed to wear any garment made from jute. They must not plaster their houses with any other than white earth; and they may not draw any pictures on the walls except plantain trees and date palms or figures that look like pictures of temples, drawn with three fingers only. They make their sacrifice at the time of the *Sohrae*; this is performed in the house, and they sacrifice a pig. One year it must be a male uncastrated pig and the next year a female, and if for any reason they cannot get hold of a pig they may sacrifice a black hen. They should sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit in the shelter of a white ant hill,[1] but in these days they bring some earth from the ant hill into the house and sacrifice there."

In a Sarenga schoolboy's essay on the origin of his own clan, he began by relating the creation of mankind and finally continued: "All the Sorens were the soldiers of the Kisku, who were the owners of the village at Campa Gar. The Marndi lived at Cirunala, and between the two villages there flowed the Sitanala river. They began to quarrel with each other because the people of the two villages had to use the same river for bathing and for drinking water. Now, since the Soren were the soldiers of the Kisku, they are like the Gurkhas of Nepal. Just as the Gurkhas are fierce and do not fear death, so too the Soren." So is virtue inculcated by fostering pride in the clan. One of the sub-clans of the Soren is the Poita Soren. *Poita* is the word—as pronounced by the Santals—for the sacred thread of the Brahmin. They relate that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as Poita Soren. When they sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit they sacrifice to him alone, and the offering has to consist of a male uncastrated pig. The rite is performed at sunrise. They may eat the flesh at any time during that day and the following night, and if they are unable to finish it they must bury it before the following sunrise

[1] For references to the sanctity of white ant hills see *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, by W. Crooke, C.I.E., p. 380. The belief is widespread in India. "From early times the earth from an ant hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars."

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and then a ram. The blood is placed in a vessel and fixed on the ground, surrounded with small stones. Only men may eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The girls of this sub-clan are not allowed to wear Bengali-style *saris* or shell bracelets at the time of their marriage, though they may do so after they are married. When the men of this sub-clan are bringing brides to their home they present them with a *hasli*, the neck ring, made of brass.

A whole range of the sub-clans is known as *Sada*, or "white". They may represent a reforming element, for their characteristic is a revolt against the use of red vermilion paint. When the first ancestors of the Sada Hembrom, so it is said, were going to perform a sacrifice they thought that they had with them all that they needed, but when they reached the spot where the sacrifice was to take place it was discovered that they had left behind their supply of *sindur*, the vermilion-coloured earth that plays a large part in the Santal cult. When they saw this they completed the sacrifice without the *sindur*, and since then their descendants have been known as Sada Hembrom and they have continued to observe the custom so carelessly begun! In other ways, too, they have abjured the use of vermilion. They make no use of it in the marriage ceremonial, though once their daughters are married and have become members of other clans they may put vermilion in the parting of their hair. The cloth which is a part of the presents given at the time of marriages must be white without any border, and their womenfolk are limited to plain cloth throughout life. The same pattern of behaviour applies to all the Sada sub-clans. The Sada Hāsdāk', along with some other sub-clans, when they perform their sub-clan sacrifices, first of all model a scorpion out of paste made from flour and water and offer it before going on to offer a hen, then a pig, and lastly a goat. This particular sub-clan has to eat all the flesh of the animals sacrificed and they are not allowed to throw any part of it away.

Some of the Murmu sub-clans are restricted in the type of dwelling-house that they may build. The majority of Santal house roofs are constructed on what is known in Bengal as the "charchala" plan. This consists of a thatch that slopes up from each of the four walls of the house. The main beam is set well above the four walls, being smaller than the length of the house, with four corner beams fixed two at each end of the main beam and going down to the four corners of the house to form the first stage of the framework on which the thatch rests. Most of the Murmu, however, have to build up the two end walls so that

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the centre forms the apex of a triangle. The main beam rests on these walls with rafters sloping from it down to the other two walls. The resulting roof has only two thatches, sloping to the front and the back of the house respectively. The Gar or Fort Murmu are able to provide but little information about their origin, but they maintain their distinctive tradition in the matter of the sub-clan sacrifice. It is performed during the month October-November out in one of their own rice fields. The one sacrificing has to observe the customary abstinence of priests during the previous night, and the sacrifice takes place just after the sun has risen in the morning. A circle of flour paste is made on a spot levelled and cleaned for the purpose, and a larger circle of white stones is constructed round it. All who are going to partake of the flesh have to remain within this enclosure. First of all they sacrifice a black hen, which can be eaten by men only. Next they sacrifice a pig, the flesh of which may be eaten by the women as well. After this they sacrifice a white hen and finally a brown hen, and again it is only the men who may partake of these. The gathering and the attendant feasting last through the whole day, and they return to their houses at nightfall, leaving no food. They believe that some misfortune will fall on them if they have not finished eating while daylight lasts.

There is a sub-clan of the Ṭuḍu known as the Kāṛā or Blind Ṭuḍu which is accounted for in the following way: "The first Kāṛā Ṭuḍu placed a torn cloth behind the fireplace in his house. In the evening when his wife went to cook she found the cloth there and cooked the supper herbs wrapped up in it. Then the man who had put the cloth down came to look for it, and not seeing it behind the fireplace he asked his wife if she had seen it. 'Yes,' she replied, 'it must be the one in which I wrapped the supper herbs.' They raked out the fire and the ashes and saw that she had in fact burnt that cloth."

Many of the points that have been raised in this chapter cannot be understood apart from matters that are dealt with in subsequent chapters. The stories have been gathered together in this way in order to bring out the fact that in the clan system of the Santals and in the myths that form its background there is a key to the understanding of nearly everything that is distinctive in their way of life. The clan organization regulates their behaviour within the tribe and their dealings with the spirits. They accept its rule without question, and so long as they live in closely knit village communities this system, with its manifold implications, will continue to control their lives.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

jaher rather than as the *Maṇjhi than*. Until recently the shrine had been in another place beyond the present limits of the dwellings, and the villagers had found such a site very inconvenient. They were encouraged to change the site by the fact that in the street there grew an *arjun* tree, one of the sacred trees of Hinduism, and they felt they should do something to signalize its presence in the village. On a cleared space at the base of the tree there were two miniature wooden seats which were used by the spirits when they came, and there were also a clay horse and an elephant which had been in position there since the establishment of the shrine. The duty of tending these shrines, of sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung, falls upon an unmarried girl from the headman's house. The headman officiates as the priest at this shrine, presenting the offerings to his ancestors as the representative not only of the family but also of the living members of the village community. Offerings are made during the *Mokor*, the festival that closes the month of *Pus* in mid-January, and also during the Spring and Harvest festival seasons. Animals are sacrificed, but there is a significant difference in the methods of killing the animals offered in the sacred grove to the tribal spirits and those offered to the spirits of the ancestors. In the case of the former the animal is beheaded, but in the latter the animal is struck by a heavy implement on the back of the head so that the blood is not poured out. It does not seem possible to obtain any explanation of this from a Santal, apart from the all-embracing statement that "it is the custom". There is here another indication of the complexity of Santal religion; it would be difficult to fit all the facts into a scheme that seeks to find the origin of sacrifice in a single or simple cause.

The spirit world is not only the concern of the whole community or of each village but also of each family, a fact that finds embodiment in the cult surrounding the third sacred place of the Santals. This is a sacred enclosure inside each dwelling-house known as the *bhitar*, an Indo-Aryan word that means "within". This is formed by constructing a wall across the breadth of the main dwelling-house and so dividing the interior into two rooms with a mud partition between. The *bhitar* is the smaller of the two. The wall may be carried as high as the average height of a man, but often it is only about four feet high. The opening through which members of the family may pass from one room to the other is left vacant without a door. There are no sacred emblems kept in the *bhitar*,

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and in fact it is used extensively as a storeroom, particularly for stacking the bundles of reserve rice. Any man may pass through this opening, but no woman may do so unless she belongs to the family living there. The daughters of the house are debarred from going into the *bhitar* after they have married. After marriage a woman belongs to her husband's family, and this prohibition is one of several that are enforced with a view to ensuring that she shall not bring calamity on her husband's house by continuing to have dealings with the spirits of her father's home. She has to remove herself from their influence. Within the *bhitar* dwells the house spirit, and it is also visited by the ancestors of the family. There offerings of food and beer are made to the immediate ancestors. In certain instances sub-clan sacrifices are made in this inner room. The names of the spirits to whom the sub-clan sacrifices are made are kept secret. The knowledge of these names is handed down within each family from the father to the eldest son or other heir, and under no circumstances should it be imparted to others. An instance was reported of a man who was in deep distress because his father had died without his having had an opportunity of learning the name of the *abge*, as this spirit is called. He hoped to learn the name from one of his father's brothers, but this person also died before he could pass on the information. Shortly afterwards his dead uncle appeared to him in a dream and revealed the name, and he confirmed the correctness of the information by visiting yet another uncle who knew the secret. This story shows that the rules of silence are not too strictly observed within the family circle. Women are not allowed to learn the name, and in most cases they are excluded from participating in the sacrificial meal. The same prohibition applies to sons-in-law, though one of the Soren sub-clans is allowed to leave a portion of the food from the meal for their sons-in-law. When they summon them to eat, however, they address them as they would the household dogs, which emphasizes their separation from the family and from the sub-clan.

Some features of the Santal cult, as well as an indication of the ways in which it may develop, can be illustrated by a description of the shrine that stands on the outskirts of the village of Sarenga. This village was at first a Santal settlement, but it is now a place of nearly two thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Bengali Hindus. The present-day Santal inhabitants number barely one hundred, but amongst them are some who claim descent from the founders of the village, who lived, so they say, nine generations ago.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

When it has been established that a witch is at work and that she lives in a certain house or village, the villagers of the sick person proceed to the *jan*, or witchfinder, who must give precise information about the individual who is a witch. None of the *jans* in the area are Santals, but the latter consult them quite freely. These men are notorious for having their scouts in the countryside, and they manage to secure all the information that they require before the party of villagers comes to them. They uphold their reputation not only by finding witches, but through being credited with second sight in other matters. They are consulted about lost and stolen property and about straying cattle.

All the witches of the Santals are women. This suggests that women find some compensation in a "private" cult for the fact that they are cut off from active participation in the tribal worship of the spirits. The general term for a witch is *ḍạn*, and ordinarily the *ḍạn* is reputed to be a member of a secret society with its own ritual and magic. Undoubtedly there are women who believe themselves to be *ḍạn*. The *ḍạn ḍhạkin* is one who possesses some kind of evil nature and is able to put the "evil eye" on others. The fear of these witches is responsible for the fact that Santal houses are built without windows. When sometimes they leave an opening in the wall, they see that it is very small and so placed that no person standing outside will be able to look at any of the individuals inside, especially at night. The *ḍạn jugin* are persons who use magic and know sorcery.[1] They acquire influence over certain *boṅgas*, and they make use of material objects in doing so. One of the tasks of an *ojha* who declares that there are buried *boṅgas* at work in a house is to locate them. He finds them buried in the house or the courtyard in the form of stones with human hair tied to them. The *ḍạn* can gain control of a person and cause madness, a point that is well brought out in a story that is related here in the form in which it was told. "There was a youth in our village about sixteen years old, named Monmotha. One day last year he was going through the jungle from Calta to Beltwala; he returned at about noon, and on his way he had to pass a *boṅga than*. As he was passing it he was struck with fear, and when he reached home he was out of his senses and began to talk a

[1] The distinction between witchcraft as an influence and sorcery as a magic art using material objects made by E. Evans Pritchard in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford University Press) seems to find some correspondence here.